

Shenandoah

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FICTION

DAVID R. BUNCH

EDWIN MOSELEY

ARTICLES

JAMES BOATWRIGHT

DOUGLAS DAY

LOUIS D. RUBIN, JR.

POETRY

WILLIAM H. CHAPLIN

CHARLES EDWARD EATON

CHARLES FARBER

NICHOLAS FLOKOS

EMILIE GLEN

ANTHONY HULL

WANDA KOLLING

JOAN LABOMBARD

JEROME L. MAZZARO

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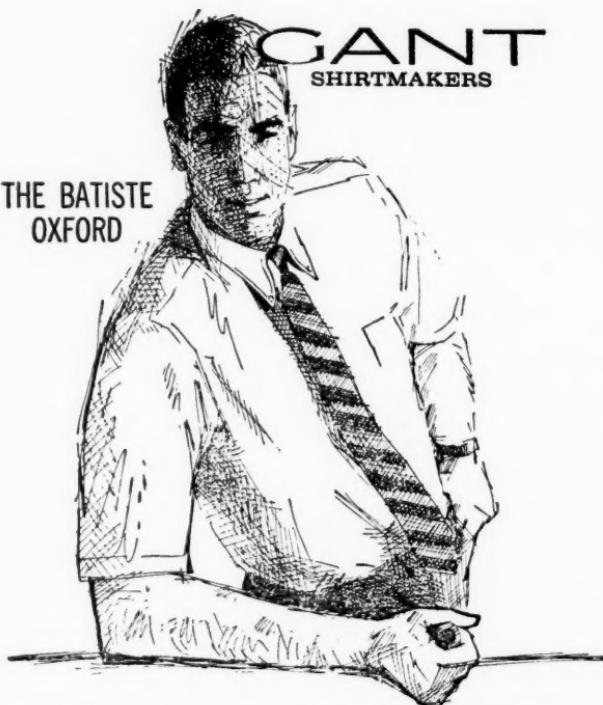


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Douglas Day

THE NEW OLD POETRY OF WITTER BYNNER

At an age when most lyricists have turned either to public poetry or to wan restatements of the themes of their youth, Witter Bynner, now seventy-nine and more than half-blind, has produced, with his recent *New Poems, 1960*, a group of verses which seem at first glimpse to be startlingly original ventures into Romantic extremism. The best of his earlier work had been collected in 1943, and, after the publication of *Take Away the Darkness* in 1947, historians of modern poetry—as well as Bynner himself—had assumed that his career as a poet was over. He was generally conceded to be a man who had done many things well; but few critics thought of him as much more than a competent writer of pleasant, facile lyrics, who had occasionally been a rather bland dabbler in several of the less virulent poetic experiments of the century. Bynner's position was a secure, if minor, one.

Then, in the winter nights of 1958, a curious thing happened: as Bynner slept, whole poems, completely formed, began appearing before his "inner eye." On awakening, he wrote them down exactly as they had presented themselves to him; and, in a few short months, he had accumulated in this manner all of the hundred and thirty-one short pieces published in *New Poems, 1960*.

Our immediate response to such a phenomenon is, naturally enough, one of skepticism. What might be called the Poetry of Trance has been with us off and on since Coleridge and "Kubla Khan" in 1798; but, almost without exception, writers whose poems have come to them in dreams have felt the need of applying to the rough products of their subconscious some measure of what Robert Graves has called "secondary elaboration"—a ra-

tional, disciplining structure, through the application of which the poem would be given form, coherence, internal unity. But, we are told by Paul Horgan, Bynner's reviewer in *The New York Times* (and, incidentally, one of Bynner's closest friends), the poet's conscious disciplining process had almost nothing to do with these new poems: we see them just as they came to Bynner while asleep.

Certainly, there is much in the poems that seems to come from an area totally unoccupied by logic: beds, chairs, and sofas sidle across rooms; a man reaches the top of a hill only to find himself lower than when he had begun; sloths appear improbably on door-sills; tall men placidly tear up street-signs; three-eared elephants repose in bathrooms; and "two slender oysters on a spring walk" gossip along, pulling their pearls behind them on leashes. The law of gravity is in abeyance, and the boundaries of time and space dissolve:

If I could let go
and swim through time
I might reach an unsuspected end
of it

But it is an acrobat
Facing either way
And if I pass it one way
It turns the other

Judges as well as athletes
forget that time runs back
Faster than forward.

Men walk on ceilings; swallows fly backward; and deers run about, not on their feet, but on their antlers.

These situations, and others just as ludicrous, are plentiful in *New Poems, 1960*. Perhaps most disturbing of all, however, is the way in which seeming irrelevancies intrude, usually as end-lines, destroying any semblance of rationality a poem might otherwise have possessed:

The edges of the house
Are perhaps more fun
For the mouse
Than all of it
Especially to the left.

Or, more understandably:

It was his jaw that was wrong
said the doctor
It could not keep from laughing
So it had to be broken and mended
Which was done
Without mending the laugh
Psychiatrists shook their heads
at him
But only one came off.

The humor in such instances is obviously intentional; and we are at first likely to suspect that Witter Bynner is here poking sly fun at the tame way in which readers of poetry have come to swallow even the most pretentiously outrageous obscurities if they are put forward straight-facedly by those contemporary poets who have been academically certified as "major." Our suspicions may be intensified when we recall that Bynner had done just this sort of thing once before.

After a brief and moderately successful career as one of the more rhapsodic of the "New Poets," during which he undertook to emulate—minus some of the barbaric yawp—Whitman's paens to the democratic spirit, Bynner found himself a member, along with Wallace Stevens, Carl Van Vechten, and Gilbert Seldes, of Donald Evans' Greenwich Village coterie of aesthetes. The literary world was then in the midst of the turmoil caused by the importation of Imagism and Vorticism, and Bynner, scornful of the easy success of the ismatic poets, undertook to parody them by beginning his own movement. The result was *Spectra* (1916), in which Bynner (as "Emanuel Morgan"), and his friend Arthur Davison Ficke (as "Anne Knish") announced the formation of the Spectrist Movement. To Bynner's delight, Spectrism caught on; his book got a good press, and hundreds of young poets across the country declared themselves disciples of Emanuel Morgan—all this in spite of the presence in *Spectra* of such transparent parodies as "Bacchanal":

If I were only dafter
I might be making hymns
To the liquor of your laughter
And the lacquer of your limbs.

But you turn across the table
 A telescope of eyes,
 And it lights a Russian sable
 Running circles in the skies . . .

Till I go running after,
 Obeying all your whims—
 For the liquor of your laughter
 And the lacquer of your limbs.

Two years later the hoax was revealed, but Bynner had done what he set out to do: the public had become painfully aware of its gullibility, and ceased—for a time, at least—to leap to the support of each new -ism that sprang up.

If *New Poems, 1960* is, like *Spectra*, a parody, what sort of poetry is it a parody of? Of Surrealism, Dada-ism? Possibly, but not probably: Bynner is surely still too acute to waste his time flogging such dead horses. Of Gertrude Stein's rambling incoherencies, then? There is almost nothing in *New Poems, 1960* that looks like her "automatic writing": Bynner's poems are all too tightly constructed, too rationally-irrational for that. The only modern writer these poems call to mind is T. S. Eliot. When we read

Any other time would have done
 But not now
 Because there is no time
 And when there is no time
 It only stands still on its
 own center
 Waiting to be found

or (one of the best poems in the volume)

All tempest
 Has
 Like a navel
 A hole in its middle
 Through which a gull may fly
 In silence

we think of Eliot's still point of the turning world, timeless, quiet, and unchanging. There is in Bynner's poetry, as in *Ash Wednesday* and *Burnt Norton*, the sense that patience, humility, and introspection are the qualities that lead to the attainment of the still

point. But we cannot on this account alone call Bynner's poems parodies of Eliot's, because any similarity between the two ends here; and semi-mystical conceptions of time are common coin in twentieth-century poetry. The passages in Bynner's poems which evoke recollections of Eliot are, moreover, part of a theme which is seriously taken up several times in the book, and which seems indeed to be a product of the poet's subconscious: the necessary presence in life of silent recesses into which creatures can creep for quiet and for solace from the confusions of the time-driven world. Time and again we encounter the still point, when it is (as in the last poem quoted) a navel-like hole in the middle of a tempest, or when it is a

preternaturally small cave
Into which creatures crawled
backward
Without sufficiently asking where
or when;

or when it is a circular den—the "silken silent universe"—woven by a great spider, who presently will put a stop to the annoying buzz our "bluebottle planet" makes as it struggles in the web; or when, more cryptically, it is an "open mouth" into which

no bird ever enters . . .
Except to lose his song
In frozen laughter.

Most important in *New Poems, 1960*, however, is imagery drawn from the sea—which, Freud and Jung agree, is, along with the conception of the dark cave as the ultimate source of life and knowledge, one of the basic preoccupations of the subconscious mind. When the caves and the sea exist together in a poem, water is likely to represent the flux of time, in which we swim confusedly; more often, though, the sea finds its way into the poems as the appropriate medium for Bynner's favorite creatures—sharks, dolphins, turtles, crocodiles, coral, barnacles, gulls, pelicans—all of which are invested with the qualities of great wisdom and patience, and all of which are somehow privy to the innermost mysteries of existence. Most poets have contrived to elevate such archetypes as the sea and the cavern to a level of consciousness at which they can function as parts of a recognizably logical struc-

ture; but in most of Bynner's new poems they seem to exist simply for their own sake, as indeed they must do when they occur to us in our dreams. They have a meaning, we are sure; but it is a meaning which will yield itself only to analysis by those equipped to probe the sub-rational levels of men's thoughts. Perhaps someday another John Livingston Lowes will come along and explain for us all the sources for Bynner's imagery; but it seems enough now to say that, judging from their content, these poems appear to be in fact what Bynner and his friend Horgan claim they are—the direct transcriptions of dream-visions.

But our suspicions are aroused again when we consider the form and diction of the poems. Ought not verses dredged up bodily from the subconscious to be fragmentary, amorphous, rambling? Ought they to be quite so sculptured, so carefully wrought? Ought the allusions to be so graspable, the language so clear? We may be momentarily deluded by the frequent abrupt transitions, the apparently unrelated interjections and surprise endings in many of the poems; but a more careful examination of *New Poems, 1960* reveals that a rigid formal structure has been overlaid on these visions, lending to them a precision and terseness they could not otherwise have had. Could such a disciplinary process be anything but the conscious action of a skilled poet? When we read such a pithy, complex-simple piece as

Kindness can go too high
Even in heaven

A hawk carrying a fish
For instance

And giving it air

can we believe that such admirable brevity could have sprung whole from the mind of a sleeping man? Perhaps not; but another glimpse at Witter Bynner's career as poet might provide a partial explanation for this apparent discrepancy.

There is a rather fatuous, dilettantish American poet in D. H. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* who has recently returned from the Far East, and who waxes ecstatic when asked for his impressions of China. The American poet is Lawrence's caricature of Bynner, who had just published a waspish and excessively vicious

poem about Lawrence in which he asked the novelist if he were "a man wishing to be an animal, or an animal wishing to be a man." It is hard to say how just Lawrence's portrait of Bynner might have been; but it is certain that the poet was indeed a most ardent sinophile. Bynner's early travels in China resulted in a fascination with Oriental poetry and philosophy which was to lure him away from his early literary role as homilist for the ideal democracy; and we find him writing in 1919 (in *The Beloved Stranger*) poems which possess the spareness, the static tranquility of ancient Chinese poetry—and which, incidentally, often dwell on themes of the sea, time, and the virtues of changelessness. Then, in the Chapala poems of *Indian Earth* (1929), he obtained striking effects by transposing the Oriental manner to a Mexican provenience, as he attempted to do for an ancient American culture what the poets of the T'ang Dynasty had done for their own. In "A Boatman," for example, which is a modified *shih* poem, Bynner seeks to convey the unconscious communion between the Indian peasant and the old land in which he lives:

In a pool of shadow floating cool on the sand,
As if for a fish to lean in motionless,
The boatman lies asleep, shirt wrinkled away
From his brown middle, hands under head, legs
Dreaming of death; and close to him as a weed
Is to a fish, his hat is sleeping too. . . .
How intimate he is with the good earth,
As if, long buried, he were still alive
Among the many other mounds of sand.

In this year Bynner published *The Jade Mountain*, an anthology of three hundred poems of the T'ang Dynasty. These seventh-to-ninth century verses had all been composed in accordance with a formal strictness that is hard for Westerners to understand—most were limited either to four or eight lines, with either five or seven monosyllabic characters in each line; no character was to be used twice in a poem; a single rhyme was to be employed, to occur in alternate lines; and so on. The tone was to be matter-of-fact, the action to be negligible, the subjects to be drawn from everyday life. The result of such stringent restrictions was a body of poetry that was surprisingly precise, concrete and

calm, as we see in one of the best examples, a poem by Liu Shénsü:

On a road outreaching the white clouds,
By a spring outrunning the bluest river,
Petals come drifting on the wind
And the brook is sweet with them all the way.
My quiet gate is a mountain-trail,
And the willow-trees about my cottage
Sift on my sleeve, through the shadowy noon,
Distillations of the sun.

This, then, was the brand of poetry that Bynner sought to write. It was a far cry from the old Whitmanian freedom, but versatility and the willingness to try new forms have always been Bynner's greatest forte. He was to return briefly to his original manner in *Eden Tree* (1931), which is a sort of *Song of Myself* in modern dress; and he was to take a short fling at writing witty, satirical poems in which he attacked some of his best friends (Lawrence, as we have seen, among them); but he very acutely recognized that his talent lay not in expansiveness, or in spiritual depth, or even in malice, but in the meticulous and precise treatment of essentially light and lyrical situations. From the *The Beloved Stranger* to the present, Bynner has made the Chinese manner so completely his own that he hardly seems to belong to any tradition that can be called American.

It is therefore within the realm of possibility that Witter Bynner's new poems gain their polished, terse effect not from any conscious application to them of a formal structure, but rather from the way in which he has, over four decades, given himself so wholeheartedly to Oriental modes of expression. It is possible, that is, that the strict rules of Chinese poetry have become so natural to him that his dream-visions can come neatly packaged out of his subconscious as *shih* poems of the T'ang Dynasty.

This sounds so unlikely that we half expect him to announce shortly that he has resurrected Emanuel Morgan and used the spirit of Spectrism to perpetuate a new hoax on his gullible public. One hopes not, however; for, regardless of the authenticity of their origin, many of the pieces in *New Poems, 1960* possess a wisdom and an austere sort of beauty that surpasses anything he has written so far. The source is, after all, irrelevant: it is the

product that counts. The poems may in one sense be new and even original; but in another sense they are very old—as old as the unmodified archetypal images that give them their meaning, and as old as the ancient Chinese forms that govern their structure. It is just possible that Bynner has at last provided us with a valuable and lasting poetic experience; for it is hard to question the motives of a man who can write

You fish for people
and not even their names
Come up for you

But the sun is still there
Aged fisherman
And you sit in it
 fishing for people
And hooking the sun.



Robert Sargent

For D. H. Lawrence

Your communication came
As I sat outside in the fretful night of a feckless
 day. The flame
Of the moment warmed me, and I said
“Lawrence, I hear you, I hear you!” turning my head
Upward, heavenward. Somehow, it didn’t seem right,
Either for heaven or you. . . . Quietly, the night
Displayed her many alternatives. . . . I finally chose
The low and scorpion spot where raging, red Antares
 glows.

Charles Edward Eaton

An Almost Attic Summer

Royal summer, invisible chariot,
At least the boldest hints remain:
Anachronistic lupine, purple, blue,
Quiver in the sun, still hot
With all that may not come this way again,
Offering a wound your flesh cannot construe.

If there must be in every garden
The brilliant left-behind of spears,
How, so modern-hearted, can we harden,
Never wash out an illness with our tears?

And are we not gravely, gravely ill
From all processions having passed us by?
Thunder brings us crashing to our knees,
Prostrate witnesses when summer's wheel
Has made its last and latest revolution down the sky
In rapid exit through a blue and silver frieze.

Something thrown from any reeling cart:
Still clutching at his side, who tore through town?—
The lusty javelin that gores the heart,
Not to be used again, stuck in the earth upside down.



Charles Edward Eaton

Book of Days

Wisteria can still compel
Pure images of Isabel.
I saw her fondling their racemes
As though she would not give them back to dreams.
The seizure, I can think, might have annoyed
That enigmatic man, Herr Doktor Freud.

Such illustration on dark pages
Would have jarred him when he wrote—
What can we do with an illumined book
That shows a passion of the ages,
Reducing science to a note
On those passion tortured or forsook?

The house, alerted like a bird,
And I, dissembled, searching for the word,
In some alarm lest that devotion
Were startled into panicked motion,
Stand back to praise an icon in relief
And fear the fluttering of a leaf.

Winged house and awesome winged mind,
Be still, be still—she moves
Quietly among the things she loves.
Is this not better than one day to find
A rapid sweep beyond control,
The wind among the pages of the soul?



William P. O'Brien

The Gulls

I have seen their slow descent
From in to out of their element—
From what was smooth and effortless
To bird reptilian—stiff-winged ugliness;
Unlike the form of other birds
That do not circle in the sky;
Yet in my heart long afterwards,
Their wild, piercing cry!

Wanda Kolling

Hangover From a Housman Spree

Life is short, and little pleasure
Lasts much longer than a day,
Death is long, and deep is trouble
Miring us along the way;
Fill your cup and eye the bubble
Raising rainbow up from rubble,
Step to nimble mocking measure,
Love though fleeting dribbles treasure—
Self-deception? Hell you say.



John Pym

A Bull in the Breakers

(*Shipwreck with a Horned Figurehead*)

Small fishers and loons,
Spoon bellied swimmers upon themselves glide
Across the music of pipefish. My shipwrecked fin
Is against the tide; water in my eyelids
Drowns thoughts within; let the sea moan the two horned man,
Begger in the breakers, beachcomber, a figurehead bull.
My spine rotting in its hull sprouts a rusty stem:
Mariner, beware; a ship has fallen through the splitting wall
Of our sea, stay close to the lee; farmer stay home,
Reef the sheets in your bedroom and let the wife roll.

Three bells to the wind on bearings
Of the ebb; I sleep in the shifting oak,
Hearing the choke of sand swallowing
My keel from heel to haul, down to the wormy muck:
Fisherman I have your nets, shark I have your song.

Where is my crowing, sea-cocked sailor,
 The one with the ringbolt screwed in his ear;
 The one that rowed the women with a broken oar?
 Gone to sea with me in the mossy gear.
 Come, whale; come, porpoise; listen to him snore.

Up on the beach, the old men lean
 Against the salted sky, and squint seaward;
 Their eyes glint like spit, once the eyes of helmsmen.
 Grandfathered as pelicans they retreat from the tide;
 Old men cast off, come to ship with me, Taurian.

Old men hear the rhyming swell
 Washing a pale organ about my shipwreck home,
 Listen to the sea of bells
 And crusted tongues clapping some
 Word forgotten by the houses or hills:

Haul your graving dories and bony oars,
 (Now bite me barnacle, squeeze me moss to muck and water)
 We break in the last wave down to the dead seashore,
 Where time lies in the keel of my spine or bones of a mariner
 Singing to the bull, my two horned man, charging the ocean
 door.



Nicholas Flokos

A Little Death

This girl who died
 Too soon to know her heart:

*Peace to her loneliness of soul.
 Sleep slow.*

She wore her hope
 Like a cracked turtle's back
 Upward to the sky.

Nicholas Flokos

The Ionian Man

He was an Ionian man
Away from the sea.

He wore American denim
With a beard wishing and white
And straw sucked bottles of soda
With thoughts of the sea.

He was a man to prosper
Any listener whose heart
Sought simplicity.

He was round and small
And talked round and small.
What he said meant
Above all
An ocean
Is a
Cup
Filled
Up.



Emilie Glen

Raspberries by the Sea

Raspberries red raspberries,
Red raspberries by the sea,
 Red to the blue,
Berries from bay thickets,
 Berries in cow's cream,

Eating them by the surf
Glistens berried inland
To the silver-scaled deep,
The lobsterred, blue-crabbed, iodined ocean,
Raspberries cool-sweet to the sea salt,
Juiced cool,
Food for green lawns brought to sea's edge,
Red of its blue,
Creamed to its surf



Peter Hans Sauer

Blind Bird

Once from the soulful self which lies within me
Like the corpse of my miscarriaged dreams,
I heard a voice which told me of my own corpsed bird,
Buried in the still un-misbegotten time.

I clutched in my hand a small meadow bird,
And with a searing white hot needle skewered
The sight from his eyes. Released blind,
He flew straight high fast and up,
Up fast as a dying star falls down; and
Singing as no bird had ever sung before.

My heart's world's quick instant stopped, to listen
To his song before he fell, silent,
A torn pillow, or Icarus scorched, spewing
Across the sky feathers which floated,
Like mourners of his earth-bound burial down.

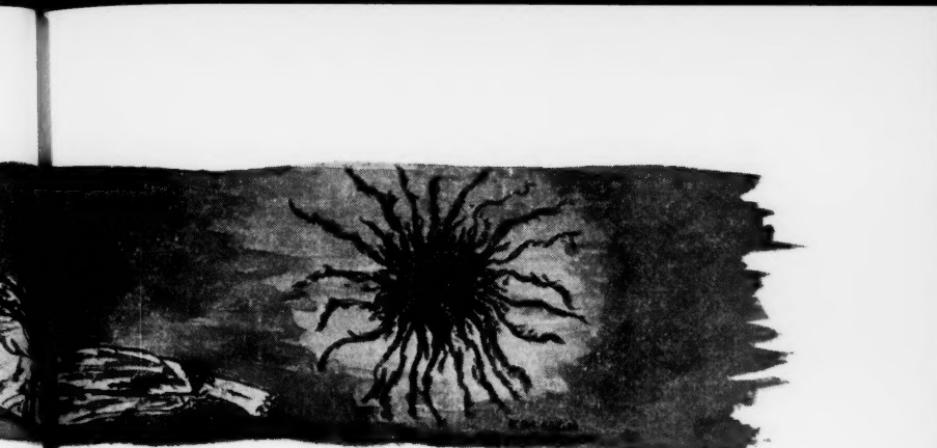


Edwin Moseley

OFF DUTY

Ben and Gene walked out of the naked light of the PX into the Army-style beer-garden. Since supper, several hours ago, they had been standing inside at the counter drinking brands Ben had never heard of in civilian life. "Yellow Barrel" was being sold when he and Gene had arrived at about 6:30. It tasted green and weak, but it was wet and cold and that was all that mattered. Like the hundreds of other boys in sun-tans, showered clean of the day's sand and clay, they pushed their way to the counter, asked for beer, and took what was handed them without question. Later Ben thought that the beer was either greener or not quite so green (by then he had drunk too much of "Yellow Barrel" to be discriminating beyond mere awareness of a change in taste), and he glanced at the wet label which he was making slide up and down the moist bottle with a half-conscious movement of his fingers. The name of the beer was "Best Beer," spelled out in a red-white-and-blue ribbon that ended after the *r* in two points like the end of a pennant. Making his way through the crowd of men who filled the PX every night by seven-thirty or eight, Ben had noticed that the labels of the four bottles of beer he held, two between the fingers of each hand, in his arms upstretched above his head, were now green and black and that he had probably changed from "Best Beer" without knowing it.

It was not so crowded near the screen door leading out into



The illustration is by RALEIGH ARCHER, a senior pre-medical major at Washington and Lee University.

the enclosed yard where long tables and wooden plank-seats were placed for outdoor drinking. Ben and Gene lowered their arms to their sides, and Ben could feel the damp bottles cooling his thighs through the tight sun-tans. They pushed against the screen doors with their shoulders, stepped onto the stairs, and looked around for a place to sit.

Ben squinted his eyes to see through the early blue-black of the evening, but all details seemed one and he gave up trying to gauge the situation before he stepped into it. There were no lights in the yard except for the reflection from the PX windows which made at intervals three blue-white patches in a parallel line close to the building; the nearest of these fell on the curved backs of some men sitting at a long table, the next lit up a group of four or five boys sitting on the ground singing and drinking beer, and the third made a circle of pale light and white sand in a corner near the fence to the right. Ben could see the flesh of the singing boys drawn tight over the bones of their faces, pale and lifeless, and he was bewildered for a passing moment by his memory of the red and tan faces in the morning sun. He could see their mouths smiling and moving, and he knew that he could not make out their words even though they were less than ten feet away. They were a part of the vague noises of soldiers talking low and laughing deep, of a cash register ringing, of a juke box playing, of

a toilet flushing, of a jeep whirring past, that flowed one into another and passed into the nothingness of men not listening.

The pallor of sun-tans and the black of the long tables made indistinct shadows through the blue night. Ben and Gene stood for a moment in the reflected light of the stairs as if reluctant to become enveloped by the darkness which made the men in the yard all one.

They walked slowly down the stairs, and Ben felt the soft sand of the yard giving beneath his feet. He closed his eyes for a moment and had the sensation of falling, falling, falling through warm, black, pressing space. He forgot about the beer in his hands and let one bottle slip from his fingers onto his foot. He felt it hit hard with its bottom, and he jerked himself abruptly back into paying attention to looking for a place to sit. The bottle had bounced and splashed beer onto one foot, making his sock damp and cool inside the low off-duty shoe.

Ben looked around to see that no one had noticed him waste a bottle of undrunk beer, but the men nearby were too much absorbed in their talk or too full of their own beer to react to him through the evening dark. Not even Gene, just in front of Ben, craning his eyes and neck for a vacant table, turned to comment; Ben was relieved and moved his foot around in the moist sock which was fast becoming warm and sticky.

"There's a table in the corner near the light from the window," Gene said.

"Good," said Ben, "let's take it."

Ben and Gene put their beers on the table and sat facing each other through the blue. Ben relaxed and looked into Gene's face. He could not see it clearly through the dark, but he knew that it was a clean, blond face, with high cheek bones; a straight, slender nose; tight, thin lips; and a moderately square jaw. At least that was the way Gene's face looked in the light, marching along the road to the range, sitting on his bunk in the barrack, standing at the counter in the PX; on the grey, muggy days, on the blistering hot days, in the nakedness of the single light shining over their cots a few feet apart, it was always the same, tan and combed and shaven, the soldier's face from the posters which said "Be a Neat Soldier," "Make Your Platoon the Best Platoon." Ben

wondered if it looked the same in the dark when Gene talked to him at night, before they were asleep, about how he had wanted to go to college, how he had gone to work in an office to get enough money, how he had decided to get married instead, how he discovered too late that he wanted college even more than he wanted his wife. He focused his eyes to make out the shape, to see the features, but the outline was lost between the blue and black shadows on his face and the diffusion of light from the windows falling on the ground nearby.

In the PX Gene and Ben had stood for almost two hours feeling the cold beer wash away the day's duties, watching the girls behind the cigarette, candy, and ice-cream counter parade their hair and eyes and breasts before the boys crowded close for whatever they could get, looking at the pushing and laughing and singing and drinking, and they had said hardly a word. In the light they were always far away from each other, Gene, who always looked as a soldier was supposed to look and acted the part with obvious ease and enjoyment, and Ben, who strived not to be conspicuous by his awkwardness and ineptitude and fumed inside with questioning and analysis and hate for injustice and pretense, but in the dark they occasionally talked and then Ben was glad for Gene. He knew that they would talk again with the half-sleep of too many beers and the shadow of the night upon them, and he spoke the first words.

"You will make O.C.S., Gene., he said. "You are what they want. I, I would not know whether to accept the appointment even if I received it. I still haven't sent my application in."

"You are too smart to be an infantry officer, Ben. That's what's wrong with you," said Gene.

Ben did not reply. He was thinking about the surprising profundity of Gene in the dark and about the effect which the beers were having upon him. The murmur of the voices seemed farther away and the paleness of the sun-tans faded more into the mottled darkness of the black tables and the blue night. By straining, he could see the boys sitting on the ground in the second patch of light, and for a moment the words "And when the war is over, we will all enlist again" rang shrill and clear through the receding din. Ben pictured himself and Gene, sitting at their

table, sliding through the dark, over a flat expanse of white sand made pale and blue until they became tiny figures across a plain, beyond the horizon, out of sight of themselves and the other men in the yard.

Ben felt the outside of a beer bottle made moist and slimy and warm where his fingers had been moving the label back and forth till it came off and rolled up into a small ball of wet paper. He recalled the ambivalent emotions of masturbation: the peace with one's self and the longing for another, but this feeling was vague and momentary. He was suddenly aware of the heat and the dark pressing upon him and making the perspiration roll from his neck into the open collar of his sun-tan shirt and pop out on his buttocks where they stuck through the thin pants to the wooden bench. He lifted the bottle to his mouth to have another drink of beer, but the bottle was empty.

"Hello, Ben. Hello, Gene. Hello, my good friends." The small, pinched face of Rodriguez smiled its white teeth at Ben out of the circle of light which till now had fallen on an empty patch of white sand. Rodriguez, the Puerto-Rican who lived in New York, slept in the cot on the other side of Ben. He did not like the Army, but he always shrugged his shoulders and laughed about it. Once on bivouac, when the tanks came rumbling and screaming near the fox-hole which he had dug on the practice field, Rodriguez had jumped out, leaving his rifle in the dirt, and run in fright, forgetting for the moment that the tanks were there merely to play at war. Later, he had laughed and talked about his unwarranted fright in an unashamed way, telling over and over: "That damn tank, he scared the hell out of me." Ben had envied his frankness about his fright and admired him for it.

"Hello, Rod," Ben said. "Have a beer."

"Beer, hell. We been drinkin' whiskey all the night," said Rod. "My friends here"—he pointed to two boys standing in the light behind him—"they're 'fraid of nothin'. They keep the damn whiskey right in their lockers in the barracks. The sergeant, he tell them 'Anyone caught with whiskey in the barrack will catch hell,' and they say, 'O.K. sarge, have a drink.' They're 'fraid of nothin'."

"That's right," a stocky, square-faced one with black eyes even darker than the night said, "I tell him to go to hell."

"Santa Ana, here," a tall, dark one said in an accent like Rodriguez's and the fearless friend's, "he tell 'em all to go to hell. He may be short, but he's the strongest man in our company. He don't take nothin' from none of them non-coms; he tell them: 'Go love yourself'."

"Maybe you don't believe him," said Rod, "but Santa Ana is strong like he says. He could break your arm if he twisted it. He's all muscle. And dance! You should see him dance. He can samba or rumba or any of them damn things. You should see him."

Gene and Ben were standing up, and the light fell on Gene's face. "Well, don't break my arm, but do a dance for me," Gene said to Rod's friend.

"Sure," said Rod, "do a dance."

"Sure," said the tall one.

"Sure," said Ben.

"We make the music," said Rod. "Do us a dance."

"O.K., I dance," said the stocky one, "but I still the strongest man in the company. I break your arm."

Rod began to sing: "Da-da-da! da! da! Da-da-da! da! da!" and the tall one chimed in. Ben stood on the bench so that he could see over Gene and Rod and looked down on the stocky one beginning to move in the circle of light.

"Go it, spick!" yelled a boy from the next table, and the men who had been sitting on the ground got up and came over. Already they were yelling, "Da-da-da-da! da!" and clapping their hands.

The stocky one twitched his shoulders and snapped his hips in one direction and then the other. He stamped his feet. He jumped first on one foot and then on the other. He flung his hands into the air alternately. He moved faster and faster, making the men shout faster in time with him, and they sang, faster and faster, making him move with increasing speed.

"Da-da-da! da! da! Da-da-da! da! da!" Ben could see Gene's mouth moving. "Da-da-da! da! da! Da-da-da! da! da!" He could feel himself shouting. "Da-da-da! da! da!"

The circle of men was moving in closer to the stocky one, and

Ben stepped upon the table so that he could see better. Only the dancer's head and at regular intervals his flinging arms were visible. His face was wet with perspiration, but his black hair stuck in place close to his scalp and his expression was immobile.

The circle closed in even tighter, and Ben stepped from the table to the bench on the side nearest the patch of light. Seeing the smooth, round top of the head bobbing faster and faster, and hearing the yell of the "Da-da-da; da! da!" louder and louder, faster and faster, had become one sensation.

"Da-da-da! da! da!"

"Da-da-da! da! da!"

Up and down, up and down, moved the tip of the head. Closer and closer moved the men. Louder and louder. Faster and faster. Closer and closer, Faster, faster, faster.

Ben felt the pressure of men crowding behind him and of himself pushing against Gene who stood in front of him. He tried to hold himself away from Gene and to hold off those behind him by pointing his elbows toward the back. But the men crowded in closer and the singing grew louder and the head in the center bobbed faster and faster. He could resist no longer. He continued to shout with the others; he let himself push and be pushed. He could feel the drops of perspiration running down his forehead, over his eyes, down the creases beside his nose, onto his lips. He drank the salt drops in with his tongue; he closed his eyes to break the blinding drops.

"Da-da-da! da! da! Da-da-da! da! da!" He screamed with the others. "Da-da-da! da! da!"

Ben felt himself falling, but he did not stop himself. For a split second he was sailing through black space, a being without size or weight or existence. Far off in the measureless void the "Da-da-da! da! da!" became a scream for joy or for help, he could not tell which; perhaps it was even his own. He reached for it as he sailed swiftly by, but he knew that it was hopeless.

"What the hell?" said Gene on the ground beneath Ben where they lay in the circle of light. Men around them were picking themselves up and laughing, and others stood watching and shrieking with delight.

"Someone pushed me," said Ben. "I couldn't catch myself. The beer and the noise." He laughed, but he was bewildered and embarrassed. He could see above him the grinning white teeth of Santa Ana, who had stopped dancing.

"Son of a bitch. Son of a bitch," Santa Ana kept saying to himself. Rodriguez and the tall one were smiling from behind him.

"What I tell you?" said Rodriguez. "He dance like a fool and he 'fraid of nothin'."

Ben and Gene were standing again.

"What a lovin' place," said Gene, laughing.

"Yeah," said Ben. All around him, men were still laughing and talking loudly with the excitement of Santa Ana's dance, but Ben felt ashamed and angry. He quickly stepped aside out of the circle of light.

"How about another beer?" said Gene.

"They already stopped sellin' beer in this damn place," said Rodriguez. "How you boys like some whiskey?" he asked.

"Have some?" asked Gene.

"No," said Rodriguez, "but there's a place just outside the camp where these boys get stuff. It's off limits, but Santa Ana, he 'fraid of nothin'."

"How far?" asked Ben.

"Just past where we have combat problems in the woods," said Rodriguez.

Ben thought of the day's field work in the area to which Rodriguez referred. He could see Gene, M-1 in hand, running crouched from bush to bush, hitting the dirt when the blank cartridges rang out, straining his eyes past the leaves and the branches to see where the enemy for the day was located, being quiet and careful as if his life were actually at stake. For a while Ben would try to be as facile and as vigorous as Gene, but then he would always think, "How can these grown men play their war games so seriously?" and he would get angry at the world for its wars and think, "Stupid! stupid! stupid!" until he wondered sometimes if he had said it aloud. Then he would feel limp and almost sick inside and ask himself how he could go on day after day in basic pretending to believe in what he was learning. At these times he always became awkward and tripped over roots

or let the enemy see him until some sergeant would yell: "Hey, you clumsy son of a bitch, get down! If you were in the real fight . . ." Then he would try again to play the game right.

Rodriguez was talking once more: "Well, I take you there if you ain't 'fraid of MP's. Santa Ana, he go there all the time. He 'fraid of nothin'!"

"I'm game," said Gene. "How 'bout it, Ben? It's Saturday and it's only ten o'clock."

"O.K.," said Ben without caring one way or the other.

"Who else go?" said Rodriguez, looking at the tall one and at Santa Ana.

"I'll go," said the tall one.

"No more of this damn foolishness tonight," said Santa Ana. "I see you again. S'long." He walked away, and Ben watched him disappear in the dark of the yard.

The four boys walked out through the gate in the wooden fence which enclosed the beer garden, and they stood for a minute beneath the street light by the road.

"Let's go first to the barrack to take a leak," said Gene, "Any-way I want to pick up a pack of cigarettes from my locker."

"O.K.," said Ben.

"O.K.," said Rodriguez and the tall one.

They waited for a jeep to pass and then crossed the street to their wooden barrack which stood next to the corner.

Ben thought that the row of naked bulbs hanging from single cords down the center between the rows of cots made the loneliness of the barrack even more apparent than usual. It was Saturday night, and most of the boys had gone into the town fifteen miles away or were still at the PX across the street. Coming out of the latrine, he looked down the uniform rows of cots with their khaki blankets pulled tight over them. In the far corner a group of men sat on two adjacent cots playing stud and smoking and swearing quietly when the wrong card turned up. Halfway down the hall sat a man in white shorts writing a letter.

"There's Bernie," said Ben. "Maybe he wants to come along."

"O.K.," said Rodriguez, "let's ask him."

The four boys walked down the aisle to where Bernie was sitting. Bernie looked up: Bernie, Ben often thought, might look

like Valentino if his eyes weren't so puffy and if he weren't getting a double chin. Ben noticed the flabbiness of his stomach.

"What's up?" said Bernie.

"The PX is already out of beer," said Gene. "Rod knows where we can get some whiskey. Want to come?"

"Sure," said Bernie. "This letter to the little woman can wait till tomorrow." Bernie began to put on his sun-tans. "What a time she's been havin'." Ben and Gene and Rodriguez knew already all of the details about Bernie's baby being sick and his wife having to find a new place to live and his allotment checks not going through for some inexplicable reason, but they pretended to listen while Bernie repeated his troubles. Ben was always sorry for Bernie. On field problems he worked with as much enthusiasm and belief as Gene, but he always looked dirty and tired and ill at ease though he would not admit it. And when he wasn't on duty, he spent all of his time worrying about his family. Playing the game was a kind of escape for him, and he liked it even though he had a hard time at it.

When Bernie had on his sun-tans, the five boys walked out of the back door of the barrack, past the card-players onto the stoop facing the company area. Ben watched a small black figure at the far end of the area walking across the expanse of pale blue sand, alone, nameless, moving toward the anonymity of the almost indistinguishable barracks at the other side. Walking across the area to the road which led to the combat woods, he kept his eyes on the silhouette and had a strange feeling that he was watching himself restless and searching and lost. The black figure walked out of Ben's sight behind a dark building in the distance, and Ben felt that he and his friends had taken its place in the scene, and he thought that after they had left the area and moved beyond, other persons would become the small figure in their stead. Always across endless plains small figures would move slowly, indeterminately, in the background of the obvious, and Ben felt sorry for himself and the others.

They walked across the company area which the men cursed for its blinding whiteness and its heat and its dust during the day, but at night the sand was soft and cool and pale blue in the moonlight. They followed the path between the messhall and

the orderly room out onto the clay road. The messhall was dark and deserted, but in the orderly room the charge-of-quarters sat writing at a desk beneath a huge bulb hanging by a single cord from the ceiling. Ben thought of the times he had waited for a pass before this desk while some sergeant looked through the list of names before him to see if for any reason Ben was among those denied weekend privileges. "Your serial number?" the sergeant would ask. "Repeat the sixth general order," he would demand. Even to leave the post for a few hours, one had to display his knowledge of military science as if to reassure the sergeant that though he was going off duty, he realized that he was not entirely free, as if to prove that he had become an integral part of the system. Passing the window in the night, Ben felt strangely as if he were in another world looking objectively into the workings of the War and the Army, as if he were a spectator in the darkened orchestra of a theater watching himself take part in a play being worked out on the lighted stage. The feeling stayed with him while he and the four boys walked along the clay road flanked by black barracks from which rectangles of door-framed light shone stark and bright.

They followed the clay road out beyond the last barracks until they reached the wooded area where they went for field problems day after day. Until this time no one had spoken. Rod and the tall one led the way, and Gene, Bernie, and Ben walked silently behind them. Rod and the tall one had stopped, and Rod spoke in a low voice that seemed to come from out of the woods by the road.

"We cut through the woods here," he said.

"Why?" said Bernie.

"The lovin' MP's, that's why," said Rod. "They wonder where the hell we goin' out this way."

"They'll know," said Gene.

"Yeah," said Ben.

The tall one looked to Rod to speak again. "We take the sand path through the woods for a while," said Rod. "Then when it turns to the right, we leave it and walk in the woods just out of sight of the road."

"O.K.," said Gene.

"O.K.," said Bernie.

Ben and the tall one did not speak.

They turned onto the path of white sand which shone in the moonlight, but after about ten yards the black branches of trees silhouetted overhead let in only occasional patches of light. Each of the boys was walking slowly, deliberately, feeling his way in order not to crack a twig or rattle a dead leaf. On night problems, they had been shown how to lift each foot and feel with the toe before putting it down again to avoid being detected by the waiting enemy composed of the boys in some other platoon. On the night problems Gene always played his hardest and seemed hyper-excited by the added unpredictability of the game, but Ben always felt more nostalgic than ever and could never think about what he was supposed to be doing. Ben was aware of Gene beside him, again playing the game with caution and skill and breathing fast with the sense of danger and mystery. He was aware of himself, like the others, moving faster, surer, as they became accustomed to the increasing darkness of the woods. Soon he could see the black shapes of tree-trunks against the black of the night, and he moved with more certainty down the path between them. Without realizing it, he and the others walked faster and faster, they increased their walking to short trotting steps, they were running; they had forgotten the concern for quiet when they first entered the woods, but no one spoke and the sound of their feet seemed to emphasize the silence of the forest. They were moving swiftly, excitedly as if drawn through no will of their own toward some indefinable end. Ben had to think for a moment to remember what he and the others were doing there in the black of the woods, and he wondered if the others knew for what they were hurrying.

Rod's "Stop here a minute" came hoarsely out of the dark. The boys slowed down and stood beside each other on the path for a few seconds before any one of them spoke. Ben could hear himself and the others breathing deeply.

"What's up?" Gene spoke first.

"The path turns to the right here," said Rod. "We don't want to get too far 'way from the road. We better leave the path and go through the woods."

"Parallel to the road, you mean," said Gene.

"Yes," said Rod.

"Where the hell is this place?" said Bernie.

"Up the road a little way on the other side," said Rod. "You know where the gate is?"

"Yes," said Gene.

"Just past the gate," said Rod.

"Just off limits," said the tall one.

Ben followed the others from the path into the brush by the side of the road. He was immediately aware of the damp leaves resisting his face which was already warm and wet with the sweat of running, and he raised his hands to move branches out of his way. He could hear the boys in front of him swishing into the foliage, and he followed the sound almost without trying to see ahead through the darkness. Without knowing why, he recalled his picture of himself and the other men of the company, naked and excited, pushing into the woman who had been both the hard, voluptuous wife of Polenti and his own slender, sophisticated Karen.

Once the glaring light of an automobile's headlights went flashing by in the distance on what must have been the clay road and silhouetted the tall, straight trunks of trees and the abundant leaves of the underbrush. Then he could see too the indeterminate black shapes of men moving forward and waving their hands as if fighting off an enemy they could not see, but when the car passed, the men became one with the black of the forest. The frantic silhouettes of the others made him realize that he himself was crashing ahead as fast as he could go, running as much as the resistant brush would let him, but he continued to hurry along with them as if he could not stop even if he wanted to. He was hot and wet and tired, but he ran on without thinking of where he was going.

A voice ahead slowed him down: "Look out for the stream," Rod was calling; "it's just beyond."

Ben knew the stream, which often served as the boundary for the area assigned to his company for field problems. On one side of it was the forest through which they had been running, and on the other side was a field of wild grass bordering the clay road

near where a post gate was situated. We are almost there, he thought, and he felt as if he could not last much longer. He would have liked to lie down and sleep there in the brush where he was, and he felt as if maybe a drink would help after all.

Suddenly he was aware of the distant glare of lights shining occasionally through the trees, and then he could see the black outlines of the other boys ahead, waiting at the edge of the wood on what must have been the near side of the stream. He could make out Gene and Rod leaning against a tree and Bernie and the tall one sitting on the ground. When he reached them, without saying anything, he let himself sink to the ground beside the stream. He could feel the earth damp and soft, and he could hear the water running quietly a few feet away. He thought excitedly of himself wrapped in a woman's arms and legs. He closed his eyes and fell through darkness off the edge of the world. The darkness was impenetrably black and warm and pressing, and suddenly it was wet and flowing, and he was enveloped in it. Falling and not falling, floating in the watery black space, he clutched with his hands and felt them sink into a wall soft and warm like a used sponge.

Far away in the darkness, someone was calling his name. "Ben," wailed a voice full of all the loneliness in the world. "Ben," it wailed desperately as if it had hands to reach out of the night and clasp him.

Ben moved with a start. He sat up abruptly, pushing himself up with his hands pressed against the damp sand of the stream's bank.

"Ben." Gene gave a low laugh. "Ben, you must've been asleep. Are you O.K.?"

"Yes," said Ben, "what's up now?"

"We jump the stream," said Rod. "Then crawl across the field to the road."

"Where the light is?" Ben asked.

"Yeah, that's the place," said Rod. "Then we make sure no MP's are 'round."

"Right," said Gene. "We'd better cross the road one by one; it's the safest."

"O.K.," said Rod. "Then we go in the place, get our liquor, and come back."

"When we gonna drink the damn stuff?" said Bernie. "I could do with a drink."

"That can wait," Gene said. "Back in limits anyway."

"Yes," said Ben.

"Yes," said the tall one.

In a minute they were out of the woods, across the stream, into the field. It was like a new world. There was no longer a moon, but the sky was open above them and the brush was pale and grey, not black like the woods. Too, as they neared the road, the lights of the place to which they were going lit up more of the field. To camouflage themselves against the brush, they moved forward in a half crouch.

Gene reached the road first. He lay on his stomach for a few seconds, looking carefully over the jalopies outside of the place to make sure that there was no MP trucks about. Evidently there were none, for he rose, jumped the ditch separating the field from the road, and ran upright across the clay highway. He stood for a minute, looking nervously around him, and then waved in the direction of the boys with a sign used in combat practice to indicate: "All's clear; advance to this point." Springing to their feet and springing forward in the way they were told to cross open spaces in combat advance, one by one they crossed out of the shadow into the light. On the outside, the place looked merely like another combination country store and filling station, except for the number of old cars and trucks parked all around, cutting off any possible use of the gas tanks by passing cars, and for the juke box blasting out a tune from within.

The place was so smoky that Ben could hardly distinguish the individual shapes of men and women sitting at the center tables and side booths crowded into the small room. Some of the men he noticed were in their shirt sleeves and wore overalls, and others had on suits, grey or brown or navy-blue, and both seemed a little strange when he recalled the sea of khaki in the PX. The women at the tables were dressed in clean ginghams or bright Sunday crepes, and each would turn and watch the soldiers as they walked by. The five boys made their way nervously to a

small wooden bar at the far end from the door. A tall thin man with grey hair asked: "What'll it be boys?" First they had a beer while they discussed the other possibilities their accumulative funds offered. And then they bought two fifths of "Green River," which was the only kind the man sold to customers by the bottle.

The first bottle they finished on the sandy path before they returned to the clay road back within the limits of the camp proper. They sat in the pale summer night and passed the bottle one from the other, and they began to talk almost for the first time since they had left the PX. The many bottles of beer, the crowds of men in khaki, the dancing of Santa Ana, the pushing and yelling all seemed ages ago to Ben, and he gave his head a little shake to try to forget them. The whiskey helped him exist only for this moment sitting in the white Georgia sand, and he liked to feel it running hot and fast into his stomach.

Ben had just taken his second drink and he laughed: "We're damned fools, I guess. What we won't do to avoid a quiet Saturday night."

"You got to live," said Rod. "This Army life—she no good. You got to drink and dance and love when you can. You got to live."

"It's not so bad," said Gene. "And this is part of it. You work hard all week, and you earn your play." Ben began to feel a pleasant numbness in his cheeks and in his temples, and he had to concentrate to see clearly the other boys sitting in the blue night on the pale sand with the dark tangle of trees behind them. He could make out next to him the sharp outline of Gene's high forehead and his straight nose and his angular chin, and he knew that the face must have its clean, determined look there in the half-dark night and he wondered if it had been any different running through the black forest. "I get a kick out of this," Gene said.

"Me too," said Bernie. "This I don't mind. It's when I hear from home that the son of a bitchin' allotment didn't come through and that the baby's sick and all that crap, that the Army gets me down. This was just as much fun as a night problem—and with two fifths of whiskey besides! God, what can a man want?"

"Just a little freedom to do something that he knows is worth doing, that's all," said Ben, and he immediately felt foolish and pompous for saying it.

"What's worth doin' more than takin' a drink of whiskey, even rotten whiskey like this?" said Rod.

They all laughed. Gene stood up. "Well," he said, "like it or not, the war has to be fought." And he handed the bottle down to Ben. "Take another drink. You'll forget your troubles." Gene took a deep, loud breath, he threw his head back, he beat on his chest, he let out a yell that vibrated from the beating of his fists.

"Listen to Gene, would ya?" said Rod. Rod got up and started to do an Indian war-dance, waving one hand and beating his mouth with the other. Gene and Bernie joined him, and the three made a circle around Ben and the tall one.

"Careful of the baby," said the tall one to Rod, who had the unopened fifth in his back pocket. Ben took another drink from the bottle Gene had given him and noticed that three times around had killed three-quarters of it.

The tall one got up and joined the dance.

"Come on, Ben!" Gene yelled. "This is what you need."

"Scalp Ben!" yelled Rod.

"Scalp Ben!" yelled Bernie.

Ben laughed. "Scalp the world!" he shouted.

"The lovin' world!" yelled Rod.

In one hand Ben held the partly-filled bottle, and with the other he gave himself support in an attempt to stand. His feet were unsteady, and he had to concentrate on what he was doing. He felt that if he moved his hand he would fall forever and ever. He saw the black figure of Gene in front of him reaching for the bottle. He gave it to him and used the freed hand for extra support. He was on his feet, but he knew that he was weaving slightly.

The dance had stopped as suddenly as it had begun. Gene was lifting the bottle to his lips. Rod and the tall one stood a little distance away on the edge of the path. He could see the streams of their water silver and black and hear it against the grass and the low foliage. Sounds of retching and the heavy

thud of vomit falling upon the sand came from further down the path where Ben could see the bent, black shape of Bernie.

"What a night," Gene said, handing the bottle to Ben. "There's one more drink left. You take it."

"I don't know," said Ben. The sound of Bernie sick made him uncomfortable. "I'm not so steady."

Gene laughed. "Nor I! That's what you want, Ben. Let yourself go! Forget all your troubles for once."

Ben emptied the bottle and threw it into the dark brush. The whiskey tasted sharp, but now it did not burn. He knew that he had drunk enough for a while anyway.

"You all right, Bernie?" It was Gene calling through the dark.

"Yeah," said Bernie. "That damn jumpin' around upset my stomach."

Rob laughed. "That and what else? How about another drink?"

"Uncle," said Bernie.

"Yeah," said Gene, "let's start back toward camp and have a few drinks on the way."

"O.K.," Rod said, "but first have one here." He had already begun to open the other fifth. He took a drink and passed it to the tall one. The tall one drank and passed it to Gene. Gene drank and passed it to Ben.

"None for me," said Bernie.

The boys walked down the path. Each weaved a little, and now and then one bumped into another. By the time they reached the clay road, they were walking five abreast, with their arms intertwined around each other's necks, and they were weaving in unison.

Ben could feel on one side of him the warm body of Gene and on the other that of the tall one. His head was numb as if his face were without features of any kind, and looking at Gene beside him, he thought that the sharp profile had vanished into the curves of an egg-shaped head of flesh. Ben felt as if his feet were not touching the clay, as if the fire of them together were floating through the dark.

He realized that he had begun to sing, but his voice sounded far away.

"I'm goin' down the road feelin' bad,
I'm goin' down the road feelin' bad,
I'm goin' down the road feelin' bad,
I ain't gonna be treated this a-way."

He was listening to himself as if he had nothing to do with the sad words that came out.

"I'm goin' where the water tastes like wine . . ."

The others joined in.

"I'm goin' where the water tastes like wine,
I'm goin' where the water tastes like wine . . ."

And on the last line, they shouted into the night:

"I ain't gonna be treated this a-way."

Over and over they sang the verses.

"I ain't gonna be treated this a-way."

The words sounded clear and sharp between the black barracks on either side of the road into which they had turned. In each the faint lights from the latrine shone into a dark hallway, and ahead the light from the door of the orderly room shone onto the road.

"I ain't gonna be treated this a-way."

As they approached the orderly room, Ben could see the black figures of men sitting on the low log fence which separated the little plot of grass from the road. The silhouettes of heads turned toward the five boys and followed them into the passage between the orderly room and the mess hall.

"I ain't gonna be treated this a-way."

They stopped singing, stood in their tracks, and dropping their arms from each other's necks, moved apart.

"Hey, have a drink, everybody!" Rod shouted, waving the half-empty bottle before him.

The black figures got up from the fence and walked toward the group into the light of the window where Ben had noticed the charge-of-quarters writing earlier in the evening. The c.q. was still sitting beneath the single light, bent over the desk, as if

he had not moved. Maybe, Ben thought, we have not been anywhere, maybe we have been here all along. Maybe there was no running through the black woods, no lying in the wet, soft sand by the stream, no walking through the smoke between the crowded tables to the bar, no drinking from the bottle on the pale, white path in the blue night, no floating through the dark and singing. Yes, he was sure that there had been singing, and he wanted to shout again:

"I ain't gonna be treated this a-way."

In the light before him he could make out five men, Sergeant Crouchfield, the top-kick; Corporal Nichols, the supply man; and Amrose and Beers and a boy he did not know by name, all privates from the second platoon.

Each took the bottle and drank. The unknown boy handed it back to Rod.

"Have another," Rod said. "We had enough."

"Too much, you mean," said Bernie.

"O.K.," said Crouchfield, "but let's get away from the orderly room. If some officer would come around, I'd catch—"

The smack of Corporal Nichols' lean hand again Crouchfield's face sounded into the night. Ben and the other boys jumped back and watched, surprised and stupefied for a second.

"That's enough chicken out of you, Crouchfield! That's the last I'm gonna stand!" screamed Nichols. He continued to hit Crouchfield in his face, but Crouchfield did not fight back. He held his hands to his face, and then he crouched onto the ground. Nichols pounced on his back and shouted: "I can't stand any more, I can't stand any more."

The c.q. had run out of the orderly room and was trying to pull Nichols away. "Help me, you sons of bitches!" he yelled to the boys standing and watching. But they did not need to help, for Nichols was standing, his arms limp at his side, his chest heaving, and his throat sobbing. Crouchfield got up and vanished into the night.

Ben was embarrassed and walked away into the dark of the company area toward his barrack across the way. Gene, Rod, Bernie, and the tall one were beside him. No one said anything, and Ben could hear himself and the others breathing loud.

In the background, he heard far away the c.q.: "The MP's will be called. Nichols, you damned fool!"

Nichols was saying, "I couldn't help it. I had to. I don't know why. Why'd it have to be me?"

About half-way across the area, Gene spoke: "I wonder what happened to Nichols. I can't understand that. All of a sudden . . ."

"It's like havin' to drink and dance and love," said Rod. "Fightin' is the same."

"Damn fool to hit the top-kick though," said Bernie. "He'll get the stockade at least."

The tall one said nothing, nor did Ben. He could hear "I ain't gonna be treated this a-way" throbbing in his brain, and once he sang it softly to himself:

"I ain't gonna be treated this a-way."

At the door of the barrack, the tall one said: "Good night, boys," and walked away into the dark.

Inside, Ben could hear the snoring of men asleep. There was no light except the reflection from the latrine which fell faintly into the hall at the far end. From that direction too, Ben heard suddenly the flushing of a toilet.

He instinctively stopped by his own bunk and began to take off his clothes. He felt for his over-seas cap, but it was gone: he must have lost it on the road or in the woods. He laid his shirt and his trousers on the foot locker, and they shone pale in the dark. He sat on the edge of the locker to remove his shoes and his socks. He stood up again and let his shorts drop to the floor.

Then naked he climbed in between the sheets and felt the sweat of his body sticking to them. He put his head on his pillow, and for a moment he spun around and around in the darkness. Then he brought his legs up close to his chest and became one with the black night.

Larry Rubin

For a Poet's Wife, Who Has Conceived

You bear creation's double burden, a creature
Foaming with earth and air, enchanted by black
Arts, asleep by pools that bloom like pearls
Within the praying oyster. The stubbled shore
Grows tender with his touch, flares slowly,
Aligns the roving parts like spears of grass,
A quiet phalanx spilling toward the sky.
The words, like unformed hands, clutch wildly
At departing beauty, an embryonic gasp away
From all he left unsaid. Sleep. Rachel, sleep!
He pressed an infinite caress upon
That fluid shadow, spilling his loins to give it shape.



Larry Rubin

The Last Statue

When the last statue falls into the fountain
And the splash circles deeper than lovers' wish,
Who will scoop the coins, climb the flashing
balustrade,
Place a new baroque into the niche
For lovers to model? Terrazzo blue beneath
The pedestal, perhaps the circles spill
Over the lip, displaced by marble, double metamorphosis
Sunk among the coins, carbonic file
Eroding the figurine, dissolving vows
As blue suns fall into the crucible,
Bubbling with a broken catalyst, a cold baroque
Whose chips and flakes of love reduce to smiles.

Larry P. Vonalt

A Garden Song

The man lies ill.
His once neat rows
Of green peas coil
Upon black soil—
Vegetable snakes
Themselves enwrapped—
Disorder grows.
That which man makes
By mind and toil
Erupts and breaks—
Peas burst their pods,
Wither in sun—
As natural gods
Enforce their will
One upon one
Till all are trapped.

JAMES BOSWELL HOWARD, who made the drawing, is connected with the Oscar Wells Memorial Art Musuem in Birmingham, Alabama.



Jameson Bennett Howard
1960

William H. Chaplin

1.

swim
and catch the moon
as Dali
does a dozen
cosmic dials
without illumination
and Death is trickling
in

2.

Autumn
floats on shifting feet
limbs and singing ceilings see
the thinly balanced leaves
beyond our feet
contain the patterned subtle sun;
Golden light which lies
unbroken
here.
Mystery does not know the breeze
which joins our fingertips and echoes

(ah)

David R. Bunch

HAS ANYONE SEEN THIS HORSEMAN

One moment outside the eleventh, outer Wall of my Stronghold I'm sitting calm as a cold ball of lead, my heart tuned to low-low, my pale green blood on dormant barely washing through the tube miles of my flesh-strips, my wide-range Moderan vision turned to casual-sweep and scouring across homeless plastic into the red-brown vapor shield of mid July. I am thinking of nothing; I am looking for nothing; I am between wars, and resting, but properly alert as always, as befits us here

It struck me hot-cold and cold-hot how he came riding. My hip-snuggie chair seemed to strike its two front feet down like explosion, sharp down to the plastic from where I had them tilted in air when I was leaned back against my eleventh Wall in my resting. His horse surely filled up a hill when I first saw him, bold on that tenth rise to my left. If I had been on punch-introven, the spiked flesh-strip feeding, I would have thought it a drunken vision, a thing bred in my muzzy sight and born in the red-brown vapor shield as mirage. But I was stark sober and the vapor was the usual and intended one for mid July.

My Warner was beginning now its din, and standard prudent Moderan procedure called for my planned withdrawal. A Moderan man sensing danger works his hinges and braces and drags his hip-snuggie chair back through Walls towards launchers. But sometimes one is drawn, held, bemused—even in firm-planned Moderan. A vision clamped me and a horseman came—cantering—in a place where there should be no horse and no rider at all. The rider reined up in a slow uncertain stopping, and I saw at once that the huge brown horse was without sight. Nay, he was not only blind—he had no eyes at all; there were two round red holes and a little stick of dried or drying blood hanging from the lowest arc of each hole. I noted especially how a cold little breeze through Moderan shook the frail blood sticks and how the

horse, bracing into the breeze, snorted lustily. I had the strange chill feeling that here was the horse that would walk right into Walls and, not seeing them, pass on through in a casual inexorable cantering. Just a feeling, of course, but it persisted.

The rider was not of Moderan. I saw that all at once. There was no mark of flesh-strip join upon him. There was no steel. He was as all-flesh as his horse and, in his way, just as odd for these times. He did not have that mutant look about him, though his horse, perhaps, did. As near as I could tell, frantically thinking back to the Old Days, this was a flesh man who had not been "replaced"; not having the flesh-strip join about him, neither did he have steel arms nor the hinges and braces for walking of the "replaced" peoples. But why? And why here?

Suddenly, and without my seeing how or from where, he had in his hands two glittering gemmy balls about the size of tennis balls in the Old Days. "When we move into that City, he won't be blind," he said and gestured at his nag. "I keep these wrapped in oil against the day when my horse must have some kind of showing eyes."

My mouth chopped hard up and down and made no sound. I stared and gulped. "We came across the blind fields," he said, "mile on mile of sterile homeless plastic. And some strange metal bird hung high and on our track all the tedious way. I thought it might be a tin buzzard. I noticed it roosted down somewhere in the Stronghold country."

He looked at me hard and asked answer. "We have metal birds of detection here," I said.

"Are they warlike? Do they eat people?"

"Everything is apt to be warlike here," I replied. "No, they do not eat people."

"I'm glad. I would not wish to be eaten by a tin buzzard. Detection does not concern me."

"Detection is for our wars," I said. "You are not of us, I see, and you do not concern us. However, when the truce lifts up, you and your horse will be blasted. Our business here is war, in the Stronghold country, and little flesh-flimsy people and big blind meat-huge horses have no place. —I do not wish to be unduly blunt."

"If you're telling me to move, you're wasting speech. And time. I'm tied to this big horse. His movements are not preplanned. Neither are they stoppable. I thought I should tell you this. —I too do not wish to be blunt. Nor do I wish to be unfriendly."

I looked, and indeed he was tied on his horse. Two lengths of soiled much-traveled-looking rope, not connected, went under the horse's belly and lashed the rider on, being knotted above the knees.

"Who—who trussed you on like this?"

"Many things, let us say, and tradition. But it was my own choosing hands that knotted the ropes to my knees. Each rope is conscience, if you wish to think it so. My horse is duty, if you like comparisons. Otherwise, just think of me as a man on a blind horse who has ridden the blind fields as he must. And now this Stronghold country! —Would you in this land know aught of such talk?"

"We have not talked so since we have come of age. That sounds like flesh talk and flesh thinking. We are 'replaced.' We hate and war by trade; our needs are served by Gad-Goes. We are completely modernized in Moderan. We are 'replaced' to live forever and have no need of bargain deals for heaven. We are our own eternity. It seems to me all these things would of necessity make senseless your talk of conscience and duty—too much concerned with emotions and heart palpitations and guess-work, which we have down-played here."

He dropped the future horse eyes into long leather pouches on either side his saddle and he stared me with a bold and steady look. My steel eyes smote his flesh ones and there was no give. "I could tell you how my horse is sometimes gaunt," he said. "Some centuries he has been all knobs, indeed. But now he's fat and ready, and I'm tied on. I am his eyes, as much as he can have eyes just now. He is my legs. I feel it in my bones we're near some bright unveiling. I must confess right now I'm riding a little dark, although I'm looking all ways for a sign. Seeing none, it's onward. That's all I know. But confidentially, soon I expect a star to point out something."

"There'll be star shells out and big missiles up and doll bombs walking, I'm warning you," I said. "And whether you're clear or not to me is of no worry at all. But I'd just as soon you were, I

guess, given a choice. What little flesh-strip I own compels me to say this, although I'm not sure I'm altogether happy with it said. And since it's come to a discussion, I guess I'm happiest when I'm steel. I guess I'm happiest when I'm in my War Room handing the big orange switch of war to ON and pressing the buttons of launchers. Or, to put it another way, I'm not unhappy or worried or asking questions then—and I'll settle for that."

"To a man twice tied by conscience on this blind horse of duty that seems a settlement of convenience. And your fight is all a make-shift sham then—purposeless, something to fill out time?"

"My fight is what I am designed for. And if you stir me, I'll blast your horse myself. With just a nod of my head it can be done."

"Blast him," he said, and a steel-cold flesh-eye looked at me and so looking stared me down. My head fell forward in shame and deep deliberation, and I thought I heard him continue, "For every piece he's torn to there'll be a new and bigger horse grow up and a rider lashed upon him." Then I snapped my head up to answer and no one—nothing—not even a shadow, a leaf, a bird or a blowing cloud was there between me and the red-brown vapor shield of mid July. —My Warner was dinnin that the truce was lifting, my weapons men as they raced for their battle stations were setting up that strange dry sound of metal hurrying inside the Walls, and immediately I had things more real than a horse and a hopeless rider to think about, or a mirage talking about conscience and duty.

The war, let me say, that followed was a tremendous success; the doll bombs homed with despatch down to the kill, the White Witch rockets flashed far and wide over steel-topped Moderan, and the high-up weird shrieking Wreck-Wrecks were never better. But next truce time I could hardly wait to get on the viewer-talk and ask all around at the Strongholds if any had seen this huge blind horse and his rider. The negative replies I received and the quizzical, odd, lifted-eye looks on the viewer-talk told me it was perhaps not best to inquire of this strange horse and his rider again.

Tracy Thompson

*Poets Are Looking More Like Snowmen
Every Blessed Day*

Middle age goes flying to the Philistine.
It is a subtle thief. First it removes
The evidence, evidence of pith and matter,
Evidence of self and manhood, as behooves
Young ladies or old bitches, dung's chatter.
The end can't wait as m.a. straining to be
donne

(For Donne was middleaged too, remember)
But middle age is hotel-heated, gas jet,
Wooled down, hypernervous, hyposensitive,
Schooled subtly or, if not, a good actor
Of a bad role; love succumbs easily to a hive
Of buzzing female bees, stung behind, before
And then becomes almost a perfect Philistine,
Unless somebody buzzes him unduly, stabs,
And then he can be fighting mad, on either side
It is a most delicate predicament; fickle she,
He almost effete, often with grief, with rage.
Thus we walk on snowshoes in our latter age.



Crystal Dew

A crystal dew is rising
above the prefabricated houses
the bricked lawns, the gabled terraces:
an urgent smoke
as from chimneys there.
It ascends beyond the willows
past the ruegardens, climbing atilt
a powdery dust of water
the gaping, yawning nurses ponder
in the hundred parks throughout our land.

At sea it can be seen through telescopes
on all the crowsnests and lookout towers.
It starts the flags, spangles the masts
and smokestacks;
finally it mingles with the stars
themselves
becoming indistinguishable from them, even
through telescopes
highpowered as a Palomar. And now,
with dawn,
it becomes a nimbus around the sun,
thin musical motes and dancing points of light.



Juvenile Delinquency

Juvenile delinquency
among the ancients, the grey-haired
hipsters, ninety-years-old
were having their field day, and
at whose expense?
Oh, never ask that question, reader dear—
another moot one to be muted, that.
But here was "Fielding's Folly"
all over again,
and here was Frivolous Sal
the roaring twenties and the nineties gay.
"I say, when *was* your hey day?"
My mask was a sneerer too
and I was supercilious.
It was like waiting for the sun to rise,
a time of fog and darkness,
feebleness making its assertion,
second youth having its fling.
We did everything but sing.

Geese

Small geese squabble and contend
nor will I gloss it,
geese are such perfect referees.
Feeling the sides uneven,
do they align for justice,
as a jury should?
O goose-wedge flying in the purple sky,
we do not mind your awkwardness,
your gray wings flapping are so beautiful
and squawking is a perfect hymn
but do you align for justice
always, geese, as a jury should?

*More Than a Postcard*

It was more than a postcard of Japan
he showed me,
Although the characters made it seem
remote;
I liked the cloud upon the hill,
I liked the bird beneath the cloud,
I liked the trees, the old man sitting
on a rock
In meditation; even the faded
colors
seemed appropriate, somehow:
The pinks and greys, the rough
texture
On the onionskin, the many inks,
For the moment it seemed right,
I thought.

Anthony H. Hull

Rain

Deep clouds of unknowing
behold
me a spirit that soars in the wet morning
across hillocks of green stabbing a haystack
that hangs on the watery horizon.
Skyscrapers sag in a vision of mist.
Spindles of song in a strange familiar vegetation
Whirl the rain round in skeins singing down
to my flying-up spirit that moves in tune
to such a source of wonder at the welkin-clouds' spring.

Unbeknown arbors
unfold
to me fruits of all the woodlands like an awning—
I a new ghost am treading the land
of my forefathers' bargaining.
Time pounded to atoms in a rainfall of dust
tears out of me a strings' exultation
that the world of green pastures and of lambs bleating round
the long glowing day of my yesteryears
is cleansed where the rain sings.

Deep spirit of music
hold
me times longer in the power of your psalms
as when King David by the water-brook meandered.
Hail to the cloud's antiphonal season,
muffling the trumpets of the enemy host—
the phallic philosophies which ravish nations.
In the rain is the cry of the babe in the wood
in the rain is a prophet shouting the word—
'In the harp lies the heart of all reckoning.'

Rain be all purifier!,
gold
of a moment refined in the palm
of my two straining hands—mine and man's.
Though time claim my skeleton
I shall furrow the green rain hale as rust
where the ducks in a haven of lamentation
proclaim that the rivers are bourgeoning brown
and the crown of all the showers
is halo-ing the Spring.

Rain and cloud who savour
a world
turned uprooted in a man's bloody burning—
put out the fires that rage in those ricks.
I sing through the rain's diapason
a song that wings from the past—
of bright flowers in all veneration
of the buds that burst up under the ground,
and of glistening farmyards steaming with mist
at the city's bright awakening.



Snow

It was a blizzard stole over the steely horizon
claiming the heart of each cold citizen;
what I saw were certainly faces—
pale forms with the snow falling down on them
rolling them into the images of snowmen.
It was death's snow-kingdom come
pressing them down into the dark, into the stark vegetation;
gone were the bridges, the rivers and barges
gone the furnaces and steel, the derricks and maralling yards
gone was the clock and the voice of the lark
gone was justice but the brute dead-level of law
without love

all was beyond belief, all beyond seeing
but the cruel light of a stone in the snow's claw
as the men marched in terror round a hard cold floor.
Just then a voice from oblivion gave me the meaning—
'The snow you see before you is time's witch
peeling men down to the raw bone of matter
smothering their spirit in the crypts of its ice
tossing them raving from down a great height.
Hear now their snowdrift of voices
in the wail of the wind see them racked
upon stalagmites in a rainbow of limbs—
how they clutch at the lichens giving praise
to the kings of undersea water
with the snow piling high upon their altars.
and as silence kisses the worshippers' faces,
tall shadows dark stalk, walk in the deep
wide world of the blind,
their stare scooping round like nets to the dead—
being servants of witchcraft, serving its kings—
like cave-monsters in the sad collective of things
bringing everything to naught.'

Soft the moon shines above that shingled roof
where on a lone rock out of the dark
a man and a woman, like Genesis, kiss
out of the snow that would have dragged them down below—
the two lovers rub hands in the nick of time
giving praises at the living proud joy of their vine
as the great blizzard passes beyond the horizon
eating the heart out of each cold citizen.

Sun

What do I see there—scourge of the lion or the sun?
yellowing the landscape with a mysterious claw
leaving strands of bright hairs on the lintel at my door.
Over there an artist his canvas is singing
with paint-daubs of song in a canyon of dens;
and the forester smiles for the first time in years
and women's white dresses like Christians in the circus
skim over the bright surface of sight
where the blood is pure joy—the landscape lies muscled
with an animal's might.

Sun, lest we forget, take now our prayers
offered up to your raging through devil-caged bars,
to the leonine You, I feed you
with the prayers of all the saints
whose hermitage deserts bled from your personal tongue,
I feed you the lambs and the fishes, the dolphins
beyond the Hesperides, so that all the dark worlds
may uncurl like a kitten in your lap
and all its meek humanity
may bask in sleep. . . .

lawn tennis . . . picnics on the grass,
lovers in the dales of our dreams at noonday,
how we remember those days
whom our own voices have devoured
till you carnivorous sun, O
savage physician with a heart-string of gold
heal us, weak with out voices
through the known panacea of your delectable light—
a dittany of herbs in a chorus of sun-flowers
restoring original sight.

Remembering those buttercups that first filled the eye
 (new born-again babes in mangers of earth)—
 such splashes of sun are more than memories who
 are truly the footfalls of the great
 unknown king of the universe forest
 stalking man's soul this day as I lie
 in wait trembling for the golden-haired roar
 of that monster I acknowledge as master
 that never breaks its silence. Sun and lion of all Judah,
 take now this psalter.



Joan LaBombard

Star Gazer's Song

Shall it be said
 There are no angels here,
 No children of the fiery choir
 Adrift upon their burning hair
 With one wing spread?

This night, I saw
 Among the spectral stars
 A host of flaming Lucifers
 And angels of the lesser orders
 Burn with such awe

The sky became
 A circle of the host
 In their gold-braided kirtles dressed,
 Whose scepters braided as they passed
 A ring of flame.

But I am mad
 And have seen lions spun
 Like torches from a falling sun
 With wisdom born of desperation,
 Who am called mad.

It has been said
The angels will appear
As lions, or the morning star,
Who draws the radiant charioteer
From his dark bed.

And I have known
The lion and the lamb
In likeness to twin seraphim
Yoked, gentle, in the hearts of them
Whose wit is flown.

This night will see
The lion's sky become
A field for lamb-eyed seraphim
Who shall be reined and driven home
To witness me.

So shall arise
The ghost and morning star
Whose rumour fire-shod angels bear
Like candles down the midnight air
To these blind eyes.



Jerome L. Mazzaro

Santa Lucia

1.

Along the rugged coast a snowy froth
Edges the sea to sea,
And on the hills a duplicating mist
White-caps the ruins of ancient shores
Outlined against the skies

Thinking such things exempla of a world
 Returning to the eye
 A natural optic law, the Greeks set down
 And founded in Syracuse stones
 And families still intact
 To mark the birthplace of a patroness
 Of sight, who seeing saw
 Beyond their closed and simple natural laws
 Of self-reflection to a sight
 More lifting than herself.
 No wonder when Columbus saw these hills
 Cutting the ocean's calm
 He named them thus: With their abundant snakes
 And deadly spiders making law—,
 One hardly thinks on life.

2.

Because the journey has attained success,
 I know you will be pleased:
 The harbors here are wide and in excess,
 Their great varieties of plants unshed,
 Studded with winter ants.
 And mountains here abound with gold and ores;
 And natives so like ants
 Move through the leaves, carrying sharpened spears,
 But always take to flight like birds
 Wherever we make night.
 Regards their humour, they have greater love
 For others than themselves,
 And willing give up valuables for trash
 And speak one language and seem ripe
 For gleanings of our Lord.
 How right and wonderful that Ferdinand
 Should snare the ghostly gems
 Of their conversion for his noble land!
 Let all the Christendom rejoice
 And welcome this new wealth!

3.

Co-co-co clicking in the old man's pouch,
The tide and tide of bones
And frenzy rising upward from the night
Cancel the sighs his stomping drones,
Releasing all to night.

Go catch the black tarantula in the hand,
And if he doesn't bite
Or kill you like an unsuspecting ant,
You'll have the magic gift of sight
To guide your guiding hand.

Or take the scorpion in between the toes
And see what he will do.
If either bites, then dance the poison through
Until it sweats from you in streams.
And leave such special dreams.

Paying the houngnan with his only gold,
The young man sets for home:
Across the hilltops the first legs of dawn
Which he would take into his hold;
At foot, the scorpion.

4.

Only the natives live for any time
In this pestiferous place
Where one is always near the famed Soufriere
Whose sulphurous odors fill the air
And ashes line the face.

Once Louis, King of France, proclaimed their streams
As healthful to some cramps
And sent his aching armies to revive
In airs less pungently alive
Then in their feverish camps.

And in the harbors five sea-crusted ships . . .
 We gaudy tourists trek,
 Watching the yellow vipers in the brush
 Deadly as spiders as we push
 Through underbrush to dock.

Here within the sight of La Pagerie
 Where Josephine was born,
 Each Sunday natives rouse themselves at dawn
 And take the many paths to town
 Where churchbells toll them in.



Charles Farber

Stranger Like Grass

To go among strangers is a cleansing;
 mouths drop from a flaccid breast
 clouds are re-arranged

rain comes through the door
 dry needles fire proffers
 its golden veinless hand.

Here's a dawn where
 there's been no night;
 you are someone come up like an emerald
 sliver of grass among white stones.

BOOK REVIEWS

The New American Poetry: 1945-1960. Edited by DONALD H. ALLEN. Grove Press. 1960.

In the introduction to this anthology, the editor describes some of the poets included as sending back "reports from the fronts on which they are engaged," and this phrase neatly epitomizes the tone of the whole book. For it is a belligerent, unmannerly, and irreverent collection. Both in poems and in "Statements on Poetics," which are included as an appendix, the manifestoes of violent revolution are stridently proclaimed, in full capitals. Propagandists like Kenneth Rexroth and Karl Shapiro have elsewhere published warnings and exhortations, telling of the new day. Squibs flash out in San Francisco, New York, and Black Mountain College, North Carolina.

To the disinterested observer, it's an old fight, but one which has a way of flaring up periodically, and always with the same participants, no matter how they are characterized—as Apollonian and Dionysian, Paleface and Redskin, or Square and Hip. But perhaps none of these attempts to pigeonhole is any more effective than the image of a violent revolution, a revolution inevitably lending itself to drama, if only the second-rate drama of a Hollywood scenario. Enter first, in flashback, the Grand Old Man of the Open Road, the Truth-Bearer with butterflies in his beard (Whitman). He preaches the doctrine, but no one listens; the world goes on its way, the prophet dies unheeded, the forces of reaction win without bloodshed. Several generations later, the palace guards effect a coup, and a new king (Eliot) is installed. But the new king is worse than the old, for he acts as if he had never heard of the prophet and his teachings. One of the revolutionists defects (William Carlos Williams), and he sets about establishing his own band of followers, followers who haven't forgotten the ideals of the Grand Old Man. Eliot, however, as both king and archbishop, has a strong hold; all of the institutions of the kingdom support him loyally, especially the graybearded university dons. And yet the fight for the kingdom of poetry goes on, sometimes quietly, sometimes loudly. What this anthology witnesses is a vigorous new battle, a determined effort to depose

the tyrant, to upset the throne, to make way for the prophet, still unhonored in his own land.

Not all of the poet-rebels represented here are in agreement on tactics—they have varying conceptions of the duties of the poet and the purposes of poetry. But they are close and brotherly in their likes and dislikes. They don't like Eliot, naturally, nor do they like New Critics and New Criticism, conventional poetic forms, useful and impersonal poetry, ex-President Eisenhower, the machine, the Bomb, the Organization Man, Protestantism, middle-class attitudes towards marriage and sex, and the aimlessness and coldness of heart of contemporary man. They *do* like Whitman (the radical and mystic, not the Whitman who is read in college survey courses and who has bridges named after him), Blake, Thoreau, D. H. Lawrence, Buddha, Indians (American and Mexican), Goya, James Dean, jazz, Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Morris Graves, and of course William Carlos Williams, their patron and ghostly father. They are against tradition in the arts, and for experiment; against togetherness, for disaffiliation; against restraint, for emotion and its excesses; against a "poetic" and decorous vocabulary, for the language of ordinary conversation (which includes an inordinate number of four-letter words). They believe in the unquestioned value of sensation and experience, and one poet has the audacity to say, "Sometimes I dream of at last becoming a child."

The unabashed romantic fervor, the advocacy of the "SELF-FREE HERO" and of the Whitmanesque dream—these are refreshing winds indeed, at a time when every academic poet feels compelled to try his hand at a little poem on Original Sin. But in their rejection of Eliot's neo-orthodoxy, these poets run the risk of succumbing to an orthodoxy just as deadening. Although many deny the rigid dogma of Western religions, an allusion to a Bodhisattva becomes *de rigueur*. Their repudiation of most traditional poetic forms, and their addiction to the vestiges of Surrealism and Dadaism, to the same vocabulary, the same disjointed and fragmented structure—all of this leads only to another kind of conformity, in which no poet can have a style or a signature. But perhaps worst of all is the "brotherhood-of-poets" stance that so many of these writers take. By assuming that to feel like a poet

is to be a poet, by insisting publicly on their roles as "poets," and by mentioning each other frequently in dedications and in the poems themselves, they begin to take on an air of desperate preciousness. Poetic chambers of commerce usually don't work, and it is difficult to imagine Blake or Thoreau feeling at ease in such company.

Yet there are authentic voices here which escape the crippling effects of pose and manner. Charles Olson, the widely-acknowledged leader within the group, has been overrated, perhaps; "The Kingfishers," which the publisher's blurb tells us "profoundly influenced many of his contemporaries and remains one of the starting points of the new poetry," seems highly derivative of Eliot and Pound, and is interesting largely because it demonstrates the attraction Lawrence's dark gods have for many of these poets. A better representative of the movement is Robert Duncan, whose prose "Pages from a Notebook" serves as a gloss to some of his work. Like Yeats he has attempted to construct a private symbolism, and like Yeats he speaks of both art and decay. "The Song of the Borderguard" is a complex and arresting description of the poet and poetry which seems to have taken its inspiration from Henri Rousseau's *The Sleeping Gypsy* (with the roles of gypsy and lion reversed, however). The guards harken to "the lion-smell of a poem" and elsewhere Duncan has equated the lion with "unfettered intellect" and "sexual appetite that knows no contradiction within itself. The dream of myself as Emperor of the World...." The poet stands as a borderguard of sense, beyond which the barbarian host—the sound of words—waits. He sings "believe, believe, believe."

I am the guard because of my guitar
believe. I am the certain guard,
certain of the Beloved, certain of the Lion,
certain of the Empire. I with my guitar.
Dear, dear, dear, I sing
I, the Prize-Winner, the Poet on Guard.

It was Duncan who dreamt "of at last becoming a child," and his poetry frequently has the qualities of a Rousseau painting: a pure, child-like directness and naivete, combined with suggestions of the mysterious and obscure. He expresses more straightforward-

ly his sense of decay and hope of renewal in "A Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar," in which "Noble men in the quiet of morning hear/Indians singing the continent's violent requiem." After a mock-epic catalogue of the leaders who didn't lead ("McKinley, Cleveland, Harrison, Arthur . . ."), the poet states once again the theme of the prophet:

It is across great scars of wrong
I reach toward the song of kindred men
and strike again the naked string
old Whitman sang from. . . .

But in spite of the perversion of nature and man that he has witnessed, the poet retains his belief that "the theme is creative and has vista."

I see always the under side turning,
fumes that injure the tender landscape.
From which up break
lilac blossoms of courage in daily act
striving to meet a natural measure.

Frank O'Hara, one of the New York poets, shares some of Duncan's attitudes. In "For James Dean," he announces that "I speak as one whose filth is like his own . . ." and in "Ode: Salute to the French Negro Poets,"

From near the sea, like Whitman my great predecessor, I call
to the spirits of other lands to make fecund my existence . . .
It is indicative of the abiding power of *Leaves of Grass* that many of these poets are at their best when they emulate that work's great search for cosmic unity. Yet if Whitman and his work are praised and imitated, the other, alien tradition is inevitably derided, sometimes with equal success. Kenneth Koch, another New York poet, has written a hilarious parody of Frost, "Mending Sump," which catches perfectly the homely sententiousness of the New England bard. Koch is also responsible for a somewhat flawed *Dunciad*, "Fresh Air," which attacks in all directions and sometimes hits its targets, but too often substitutes windiness for wit.

And there are numerous other worthwhile poems (no mean achievement for any anthology of contemporary verse): the imagistic sketches of Denise Levertov, the powerful denunciations of

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Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The really representative poet, however, is Allen Ginsberg, and he is certainly the most widely known. In his poems one finds the true revolutionary spirit, with its idealism, self-confidence, romantic passion, and violence. He has had the mystic vision, and like Blake and Whitman, he excoriates the agents of death and praises the forces of life. His form is that of Buddhist and Hebraic litany, adapted to the sensibility of a society whose god is Moloch. In "Sunflower Sutra," the sunflower is the emblem of soul, but is a "gray Sunflower," a

corolla of bleary spikes pushed down and broken like a battered crown, seeds fallen out of its face, soon-to-be toothless mouth of sunny air, sunrays obliterated on its hairy head like a dried wire spiderweb....

It has been maimed by the "impotent . . . powerful mad American locomotive," symbol of all that is destructive in civilization. The poet rips the sunflower from the ground and it becomes his scepter as he begins his sermon: "We're not our skin of grime, we're not our dread bleak dusty imageless locomotive, we're all beautiful golden sunflowers inside. . ." The sins that such poetry can commit are obvious enough; it is full of *gaffes*, of bathos and silliness. But these are the price the poet pays for the redeeming qualities of a childlike imagination, a daring and an ingenuousness which, when taken whole, contribute to a redoubtable poetic talent. Ginsberg is a natural, with the natural's ability to be good in spite of himself. Even if *Howl* is a crude and vulgar yawp, our reaction to it is probably a sign of our unwillingness to believe that for many people this is the world. In the passage from *Kaddish* (the title is taken from the Hebrew doxology), the poet addresses his dead mother with a moving and disturbing honesty, and her world we learn was the same as that of *Howl*. And in "A Supermarket in California," Ginsberg states explicitly the theme of a large part of the book, as he pays homage to his master:

What thoughts I have of you tonight, Walt Whitman....

.

Will we walk all night through solitary streets? The
trees add shade to shade, lights out in the houses, we'll
both be lonely.

Will we stroll dreaming of the lost America of love. . . ?

JAMES BOATWRIGHT

'Porte Crayon': The Life of David Hunter Strother, Writer of the Old South. By CECIL D. EBY, JR. University of North Carolina Press. 1961.

It is remarkable that until now, no one has seen fit to undertake a biographical study of David Hunter Strother, the famed "Porte Crayon" of nineteenth century American travel literature, whom Mr. Cecil D. Eby, Jr., is so happily rescuing from historical oblivion. For here is a man whose career contains material enough for three or four ordinary biographers. He grew up in Martinsburg, Virginia, now West Virginia. His father, a veteran of the war of 1812, recognized his artistic leanings and sent him to study under Samuel F. B. Morse. He travelled abroad, came back to launch a magazine career that made him second to no other popular travel writer in his day—Mr. Eby has already edited a beautiful volume of his narratives and sketches of travel in the old South. When the Civil War broke out—he was an eyewitness to the John Brown Raid—Strother joined the Union Army, serving on the staffs of Banks, Pope, Sigel, and David Hunter. With Hunter he marched into Virginia, helped burn the Virginia Military Institute, and then marched back through the mountains to safety.

After the war he became the trusted assistant to Francis H. Pierpont in his governorship of occupied Virginia. Later he retired to Berkeley Springs, West Virginia, only to be appointed consul general to Mexico, where he attended the famous bull-fight with General Grant and generally helped establish relations with the Diaz regime.

Among his intimates, at one time or another in his life, he numbered Philip Pendleton Cooke, John Pendleton Kennedy, Morse, and all the Civil War worthies previously mentioned. He had dealings with Hayes, Grant, Stanton, Seward, Washington Irving, John Esten Cooke, Jeb Stuart, Horace Scudder, and various other well known nineteenth century figures. His travel writings include much important realistic description of the Southern scene, of the sort that has made lesser writers famous. His career involves excitement, fame, pathos—as a result of his Union Army experience he was one of the most hated men in the Valley of

Virginia after the war, and old friends cut him dead. Furthermore, he left voluminous journals and correspondence, and his writing stretches through 25 years of *Harper's* monthly magazine. How in the world, one wonders, have the American Studies folk missed him?

Well, Cecil Eby has not missed him. Mr. Eby comes from Martinsburg, and had heard of "Porte Crayon" all his life, until finally he reached the dissertation age and proceeded to go to work on his fellow West Virginian. This biography is not, however, a touched-up Ph.D. exercise; Mr. Eby has rewritten it completely, and it reads well. Following as it does Mr. Eby's *The Old South Illustrated*, it marks the second, highly auspicious step in Mr. Eby's campaign to restore Strother to the national literature. I note that the Chapel Hill Press will soon edit "Porte Crayon's" Civil War journals; I hope that a further volume will collect what must surely be a treasure-house of Strother literary dealings and experiences.

And Mr. Eby rather owes it to us, because in this biography he has left out too much, if the occasional notes and journal excerpts are any indication. Here was a nineteenth-century American literary figure who considered the forgotten Herman Melville the greatest American writer! What else did Strother have to say about Melville? And does Strother have more to tell us than we now know about Philip Pendleton Cooke, about Samuel F. B. Morse? In the interests of tidy biography, Mr. Eby doesn't say. I wish he had.

In other words, I hope that Mr. Eby will not cease from his labors until he has done "Porte Crayon" in full detail, and gleaned those thirty journals for all they have to reveal to a curious audience whose appetite has been whetted by Mr. Eby's straightforward life of this fascinating figure. Our studies in nineteenth-century American life would benefit greatly from Mr. Eby's continued industry.

Louis D. Rubin, Jr.

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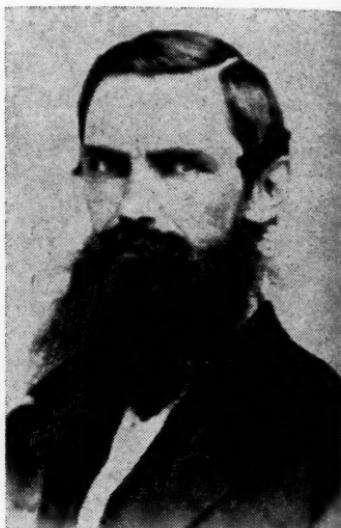
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